

to the people of the U.S. because gasoline is at its lowest price ever when adjusted for inflation, it is not welcome news to small and independent oil and gas producers who will be especially hard hit, or to the larger energy producing companies.

It stands to reason, Mr. President, that the U.S. economy and industrial sector will benefit during times of low energy prices. The bad news is that there is a down-side to lower energy prices, and one that few people fully appreciate. When world oil prices fall below a certain level, as they have recently, the U.S. stands to lose production from stripper wells and marginally economic wells, along with the jobs associated with those wells. That, in turn, has ripple effects elsewhere in the economy through loss of jobs in the industries that supply goods and services to producers, and in the communities where they operate.

While we can take comfort in knowing that Venezuela is prepared to meet our oil import needs now and in the future, Mr. President, our trip served to bring more clearly into focus the U.S. energy situation and the need for policies and programs to preserve domestic production so that the current price situation does not cause permanent loss of jobs and domestic oil and gas reserves.

I intend to take important steps in the coming weeks to address the U.S. energy situation, Mr. President.●

#### HONORING RICHARD M. WILLIAMS FOR 24 YEARS OF SERVICE

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who has spent the last twenty four years of his life working to ensure that Vermonters who are struggling to make ends meet, can afford to keep a roof over their heads. Richard Williams is far too humble to ask for recognition for those years of service, but that service has meant too much to go unrecognized.

The Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) was the first statewide housing authority in the United States, and Richard has been with it almost from the beginning. He came to VSHA in 1974 as an accountant when the organization itself was only six years old. Through the years he has served as Director of Fiscal Management, Deputy Director, and since 1984, Executive Director.

Under his leadership, VSHA has grown considerably. Today it administers the Section 8 program providing 4,585 families with rental assistance. The organization's non-profit arm, The Housing Foundation Inc. (HFI), which Richard helped to establish, created additional units of affordable housing and mobile home park lots. Through the HFI and various partnerships 1,050 units of affordable housing are now available for low-income families in Vermont. Just recently, Richard oversaw a creative interpretation of the tax code which, with the help of

the Howard Bank, produced an \$8.1 million tax exempt bond to refinance most of the mobile home parks in The Housing Foundation portfolio, to the benefit of 565 Vermont households.

But Richard was never content to limit himself to the work of VSHA. He sits on more boards and has served in more associations than I could recount here today. Among them are the Governor's Housing Council, the Advisory Group for the Consolidated Plan, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Committee. With all of these commitments, it amazes me that he gets any rest at all. Vermonters are fortunate indeed to have someone so dedicated to making housing affordable for all, and who apparently needs so little sleep.

This year, the Vermont State Housing Authority is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, and that is indeed cause for celebration. I applaud VSHA for thirty years of outstanding service to Vermont, and at the same time recognize Richard Williams for the large part he has played in that success. I know I speak for thousands of Vermonters who have a roof over their heads today because of his efforts, in saying thank you to Richard for twenty four years of service to Vermont.●

#### EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I ask unanimous consent that the Intelligence Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1751, and, further, the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1751) to extend the deadline for submission of a report by the Commission to Assess the Organization of the Federal Government to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1751) was read the third time passed.

The bill is as follows:

S. 1751

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF COMMISSION REPORT.

Section 712(c)(1) of the Combatting Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Act of 1996 (contained in Public Law 104-293)

is amended by striking "enactment of this Act" and inserting "first meeting of the Commission".

#### AUTHORIZATION FOR SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL REPRESENTATION

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, further, on behalf of the majority leader, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 202 submitted earlier today by Senators LOTT and DASCHLE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 202) to authorize representation by the Senate legal counsel.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, as my colleagues are aware, the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 created procedures for judicial review of employment discrimination claims throughout the Congress to govern cases arising after the requirements of the law took effect on January 23, 1996. The Senate's antecedent process for review of discrimination claims in Senate employment, which was created by the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991, continues to govern older cases. The cases of William L. Singer versus Office of Senate Fair Employment Practices and Office of the Senate Sergeant at Arms versus Office of Senate Fair Employment Practices, now pending in the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, arise under the 1991 Act.

These consolidated cases present the Federal Circuit with two petitions for review of the same underlying order. The first petition was filed by William Singer, a former member of the Capitol Police. After Officer Singer filed his petition for review, the Office of the Senate Sergeant at Arms, Officer Singer's "employing office" under the statute, filed its own petition for review. Both petitions seek review of a ruling of the Select Committee on Ethics concerning Officer Singer's request for reimbursement of attorneys' fees incurred in an underlying employment discrimination action.

Under the Government Employee Rights Act, a final decision of the Ethics Committee is entered in the records of the Office of Senate Fair Employment Practices, which is then named as the respondent if the decision is challenged in the Federal Circuit. As petitions for review in the Federal Circuit challenge final decisions of a Senate adjudicatory process, under the Government Employee Rights Act the Senate Legal Counsel may be directed to defend those decisions through representation of the Office of Senate Fair Employment Practices in court.

Accordingly, this resolution directs the Senate Legal Counsel to represent